

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

VOL. V

DECEMBER, 1904

NO. 3

EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE PROTECTIVE FORCES IN THE WORLD

THE subject of Bishop Brent's sermon to the nurses of the Guild of Saint Barnabas, delivered at the annual council in October, which we are privileged to publish in this issue, suggests a very beautiful thought for the Christmas season.

Bishop Brent refers more especially to the protective forces in the spiritual world, and he shows how the influences for good in the spiritual life predominate over the influences for evil. He also applies this principle to what we commonly call nature's wonderful tendency to restore rather than destroy life and health. We all know so well from practical observation that the tendency of sick people is to get well rather than to die, if conditions are made in any small degree favorable, and we see more and more, as science advances, medicine and artificial means being abandoned and, in the majority of cases, the patient placed under simple hygienic conditions where nature's laws may be left unimpeded to work the cure, with such aids as can be safely offered by good nursing, proper food, and cleanliness.

We see still another application to which Bishop Brent's idea may be very appropriately applied at this time, and that is in relation to the protective forces that would seem to have guarded the developing of the nursing profession, now fast becoming one of the greatest influences for good in the world.

It has been fifty years on October 21 since Florence Nightingale sailed from England on her wonderful mission to the soldiers of the Crimea, demonstrating to the world the influence of education applied to nursing, and from that day to this, as we look back over the first half

century, there would seem to have been a special protective force in the world that has carried the development of nursing always forward, until the hospitals of the civilized world have been transformed from places of misery and neglect to places of happiness and comfort. The poor in their homes in the great cities need no longer suffer or die from lack of care, and the rich receive a kind of service never dreamed of under the old régime, before Florence Nightingale applied the principles of education to nursing.

Groups of women have succeeded one another in carrying forward the work begun by this solitary pioneer, hardly realizing, many times, that they were a part of a great civilizing force: many dying in the service, others giving to it the best of their years, hundreds falling by the way for lack of courage and strength, but always there have been those who have taken up the lines and carried them on, in their turn, to higher planes.

In spite of every obstacle born of ignorance, of prejudice, of commercialism, of selfishness, of discord and friction, the protective forces have prevailed and the work has gone slowly and steadily forward—never backward.

To know what the future of nursing is to be is withheld from us, but we do know that each individual woman, however obscure, is a factor in the work begun so gloriously fifty years ago, and that according to the way in which she lives her life she aids or impedes the forces that are carrying forward nursing standards.

Naturally, at the Christmas season our hearts turn to the home, to the children who are dear to us, to our friends, to the poor, and to the lonely. The greatest lesson the Christian Church teaches is to give, to share with others the little we may have for ourselves. We need constantly to keep this principle before us in regard to our profession: to give, be it ever so little, whether of time or money, that the great whole may share in that which we possess, and that each one may become a part of the great unseen force that protects our professional life and is carrying it forward.

WHAT CONSTITUTES LEGAL RESIDENCE

IN the administration of the registration law in the five States where it is now in force, no one point has given rise to more differences of opinion and mistakes than the question of what constitutes "legal residence" for a woman.

The bill of each State plainly shows that to enjoy its privileges a nurse must be a resident of that State, and that outside of that State the "R. N." really has no value.

Naturally, one supposes that legal residence for a woman is the same as legal residence for a man. We understand that a man's legal residence is where he pays his taxes and votes, or where his family live or where he has lived for a year and casts his vote. In point of fact, votes have to do with the rights of citizenship, not of residence; a man may claim the privilege of citizenship in California, going there only once a year to pay his poll-tax and vote, but he may be a resident of New York City from the fact that he lives and works there.

A woman is a citizen of the place where her father lives or where she was born; she has no right to vote, although it is her privilege to pay taxes if she owns property, but not a poll-tax, which every man must pay before he is allowed to cast his vote.

This places an entirely different interpretation upon the meaning of legal residence for women from legal residence for men.

According to the interpretation of the law in New York State a woman has only to live in the State for a short period of time, paying for her room and board, to claim a legal residence; or she may have lived and nursed at some time in the State and may show that at some future day she intends to return to live there, in which case she may be enrolled as a resident of the State.

If her home is in Canada and she has been trained in New York or is practising her profession and is now living in that State, she may claim legal residence. If her home is in Canada or another State of the United States, if she has ever done nursing in the State of New York, and is now in the United States army, or engaged in the practice of her profession as a missionary or in private nursing in any foreign country, and states under oath that she intends sometime to return to practise in New York State, she is granted legal residence; she has only to prove former residence and temporary absence.

And yet with so wide an interpretation of the law the number of mistakes made by nurses has been astonishing. The common mistake, and a very natural one, has been to give one's post-office address in New York and one's legal residence in Canada or some other State where she claims her home.

This error has held up hundreds of applications in the Regents' Office, and in the great majority of cases it has been found that the nurses making this mistake have lived and worked in the State of New York for long periods of years; ranging from five to twenty, and that many of them are charter members of the New York State Nurses' Association.

Nurses have not been called upon before to deal with such legal questions, and we are not stating these facts in criticism, but to clear

the way for those who may profit by the natural mistakes of others who have been the first to make application for registration.

Another common error in filling out the New York form has been for the applicant to entirely pass over some one of the questions, No. 4 being ignored by a great many.

This question reads, "Give the date and source of each credential which you hold, including both preliminary education and professional training."

When this question is not answered the Regents' Office and the Board of Examiners are led to believe that the applicant never attended school and has no diploma from the training-school in which in the following answers she states that she has had experience and practised her profession, and her paper is put to one side for further correspondence and investigation. She loses her place in the regular order, and it may be months before the mistake is rectified and her paper started on the rounds again.

In every State, no matter when or where, every question on the application form has a significance and value to the State and must be answered before the paper can be passed upon.

The nurses may not "see the use" of some of the questions, but the State has a use for all the information called for and wants just that, no more and no less.

At the best registration is a very slow process; the papers must pass through the hands of from six to ten people before the legal certificate, which is very like a diploma, can be engrossed and mailed to the individual applicants. The forms of application need to be filled out with the greatest care, every question answered and sworn to before a notary, before being sent to the registration office. This applies to all the States where the law is now in force, or wherever a law may be passed in the future.

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

IN connection with the subject of hourly nursing we have been asked if it is customary for district nursing associations, organized for the purpose of providing nurses for the poor in their homes, to make a practice of combining paid hourly nursing for those able to pay full rates with the regular district work.

Those associations that we know about do not do this, but it may be done in some places. We would like to hear to what extent the custom is followed and the opinion of nurses in regard to it. In cities where hourly nursing is carried on by individual nurses it would seem to be

quite unnecessary for district associations to undertake this work, and as hourly nursing is shown to be so very satisfactory, both from the point of health and income, there should be no city of any size where the services of hourly nurses could not be secured.

It would seem like a loss of individual freedom to have the nurses engaged in such work controlled by philanthropic organizations.

MORE DISCUSSION.

Another one of our correspondents begs for more and freer discussion on purely nursing subjects at all of our large general meetings, like the Associated Alumnae and State associations, and also that when the superintendents' meetings are held during the same week with the alumnae that the nurses in private practice may be permitted to be present and listen to the discussions.

With the exception of a short executive session the superintendents' meetings have always been open to all nurses and largely attended, but we are very glad to make the fact clear to those who have been misinformed.

The difficulty in the general discussion has been, in the past, that nurses would not discuss unless a programme was arranged and each one knew beforehand what she was expected to talk about.

We think the fault has been, however, in too many formal addresses, too many subjects, and too little time. Our correspondent says that the younger nurses want to see and hear the distinguished women in the profession, and that to many living in isolated places these great gatherings are the only occasions when they may hope to meet the older women who have been such a power in bringing nursing up to the present standard.

We know that many of the older women feel very strongly that it is time for them to give place to the younger generation, but we are inclined to believe the time has not yet come when either can do without the other. Our profession needs them all, and our national and State conventions, to be of the greatest interest, must bring together women of all ages and every variety of experience.

The next meeting of the Superintendents' Society and the Associated Alumnae will be held during the same week, one following the other, at the national capital.

Of all our great cities Washington is perhaps the most interesting in which to hold such a convention, and nurses should begin early to make their plans to attend. We are sure the programmes will be exceptionally interesting. Neither society will have an undue amount of official business,—no by-laws this year,—and it should be possible to give all the time to purely nursing subjects, when everyone may take part in the discussions.

The disadvantages of the open discussions is in the waste of time caused by members not being informed of the workings of the society, and consuming valuable time by asking questions in regard to matters that they should have informed themselves about before leaving home. The greatest good to the greatest number must be the rule by which such large meetings are governed.

INVENTIONS BY NURSES.

Another correspondent wants a full report of all articles and appliances invented by nurses. Here is a mighty subject upon which some nurse might distinguish herself by compiling a book.

It would require an immense amount of research, as probably no description of the most valuable of these inventions has ever been published. The exhibition of appliances at the superintendents' meeting at Pittsburg last year, nearly all the inventions of nurses, an account of which was published in the JOURNAL, with an occasional sketch in earlier issues, was perhaps the nearest approach to a beginning of anything that has been done along these lines.

The JOURNAL pages are open for descriptions and illustrations of inventions by nurses, and we think when inventions have been known to have been made by nurses who have died that special pains should be taken to record their work in this way.

PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

THE Colorado State Nurses' Association, which was organized in the spring, is now getting down to business along the lines of registration, and is at work now upon a bill. Rhode Island has organized, and we hope soon to hear that West Virginia is in line. The winter promises to be one of great agitation in the registration movement, there being, we have reason to believe, at the least thirteen States that will attempt legislation this season.

Whatever the outcome, the movement is one that enlightens and binds the workers more closely together, and success will come later, if not to all at the same time.

The Pennsylvania State meeting, which was held in Philadelphia the last week in October, proved to be a most successful and interesting occasion. The president, Miss Brobson, in her address stated that the membership had increased during the year from one hundred and fifty to over five hundred. In every part of the State where meetings had been held new friends had been made for the cause. Several county medical

societies had passed resolutions in support of the movement, and the Pennsylvania State Medical Society had not only endorsed the action of the nurses, but had offered the aid of its Legal Committee in the furtherance of the bill for registration. Miss Brobson spoke feelingly of the harmonious relations of the members, saying in closing that if the bill should fail this year, it would not be because of any discord within the Nurses' Association. Taken as a whole, the record for the year has been most satisfactory.

A number of State reports have come to hand just too late for insertion in this issue.

The Connecticut association met in New Haven on November 9 and had a splendid meeting. A bill has been drawn, circulated among the nurses of the State, and freely discussed. The association has been incorporated and is in a most flourishing condition.

The Illinois association held a meeting on November 9 in Chicago. A new bill will be presented at the next Legislature. A vigorous effort will be made to carry it through successfully.

The Graduate Nurses' Association of the District of Columbia is again to the front with a new bill before Congress.

The Ohio nurses are debarred from registration by the constitution of the State, which provides that only voters shall hold State offices. This makes a Nurse Board of Examiners impossible. Like the nurses of Louisiana, the Ohio nurses have first to obtain an amendment to the State Constitution, but they are not discouraged.

The announcement of the New Jersey meeting, on December 6, will be found on page 200.

NEW YORK EXAMINERS

The report of the New York Nurse Board of Examiners submitted by the secretary, Miss J. E. Hitchcock, found on page 197, should be read by nurses everywhere. No written report, however, can give any adequate idea of the work of the pioneer examiners in nursing. It has been an experience. The members are unanimous in feeling that the beneficial influence of the New York law upon the training-schools of the country can hardly be estimated. The fact that one State has established a legal standard of education for training-schools is influencing such schools in almost every State, and the most gratifying thing about it is, that this standard has been so cordially welcomed as giving a basis to work upon in organizing and reorganizing schools for nurses.

We want again to urge upon those graduates from schools that are not registered to courteously call the attention of the managers to the fact that training-schools in many States are complying with the requirements of the New York law. It costs nothing, and in many in-

stances where nurses are refused a certificate because the school is not registered it is found that the school is eligible but has not taken the trouble to apply.

School registration is not only necessary as a matter of justice to the graduates, but by this means we are getting down to a minimum standard of education upon which to build for the future.

Remember that nurses are doing this, and all must help.

THE NEW CLUB-HOUSE

THE new resident Club-House of the New York Hospital Alumnæ, a description of which is found in this issue, is one of the most courageous business undertakings in the history of the profession. Club-houses are increasing, and if one group of women can make a success of a club-house, there is no reason why others should not do the same, and the days of living in "rooms" and taking one's meals in a haphazard way are, we hope, soon to be of the past for nurses.

The most beautiful thing about the New York Hospital Club is the tribute paid to Miss Irene Sutcliffe in making her a life resident of the house—"with her place at the table always ready." Miss Sutcliffe is one of those who sacrificed her health for her profession, and although she has a home with her sisters some distance out of New York, to always have a place in the home life of her nurses will keep her heart young as long as she lives. We congratulate Miss Sutcliffe in having trained so splendid a body of women, and we honor the New York Hospital nurses for the appreciation shown, by this action, of the woman to whom they and the profession at large owe so much.

THE NEWS-LETTER

THE Guild of St. Barnabas is to again issue the *News-Letter*, the editorial management being undertaken by Mr. Bishop and Miss Mary Sargent. The first issue will be one of two thousand five hundred copies, which will be mailed to every member of the guild. The subsequent issues will be mailed to regular subscribers only. If this official organ of the guild is properly supported by the members it certainly ought to be a success from a business stand-point, and nurses certainly know enough about money matters to know that nothing is worth having that is not worth paying for.

There is a place for an active religious magazine for nurses. The growth of nurses' work in the missionary field alone demands an organ

devoted to that portion of the work, where the details of this especial branch may be given more fully. The subscription price is to be fifty cents a year, payable to Mr. Gerald Viets, St. Stephen's House, 2 Decatur Street, Boston, Mass.

We wish the *News-Letter* every success, and our pages are open to the editors for any announcements that they wish to make until such time as the new magazine is fully established.

A HISTORY OF NURSING

NOTHING is more needed in the nursing profession than a full and complete history of nursing, reaching back into the obscure ages and coming down to our own time.

Such a book should be in every library, and every nurse to be graduated should be taught in outline something of the conditions out of which our present system has been evolved, that a more comprehensive knowledge of what has been may be understood, that plans may be more intelligently made and worked out for the improvement and development of nursing in the future.

Such a book, to be of real value, must be written by a nurse, and we are happy to be able to announce that already the work is commenced. For more than three years, to our personal knowledge, Miss M. A. Nutting, of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, has been collecting material for this work, and hopes that it may be ready for publication sometime during the coming year.

Those nurses who have been privileged to hear Miss Nutting's talks on the history of nursing at Teachers College and elsewhere have some idea of the treat in store for the profession when her book is finished.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

To the hosts of new friends whose faces we have never seen, and to the scores of old friends whom we may not reach in any other way, we send Christmas greetings.

May the Christmas time bring some unexpected joy, and may the year, as it passes, leave no memory of heartache.

